

Nativism: An American Ideal or a Tragic Mistake?

Part A. The following two tables list the homeland of American immigrants in 1820 and 1850. Using the tables, answer the questions that follow.

Year Ending September 30, 1820

COUNTRY WHERE BORN

Countries	Males	Females	Sex not stated	Total
England.....	967	561	254	1782
Ireland	944	572	209	1725
Scotland	173	75	20	268
Great Britain and Ireland	1179	640	430	2249
British America	134	64	11	209
France	282	58	31	371
Spain	133	4	2	139
Portugal	30	5	.....	35
Italy	19	4	2	25
Turkey	1	.....	.....	1
Sardinia.....	3	2	.....	5
Switzerland	24	6	1	31
Belgium.....	1	.....	.....	1
Holland	28	19	2	49
Denmark	11	7	2	20
Norway and Sweden	3	.....	.....	3
Russia.....	13	1	.....	14
Prussia	17	3	.....	20
Poland	5	.....	.....	5
Germany.....	614	245	89	948
East Indies	1	.....	.....	1
West Indies	102	46	16	164
Azores	3	.....	.....	3
Sandwich Islands	1	.....	.....	1
Canary Islands	3	.....	.....	3
Africa .....	.....	1	.....	1
Asia .....	.....	2	1	3
South America	9	1	1	11
Central America	2	.....	.....	2
Mexico	1	.....	.....	1
China	1	.....	.....	1
Europe	2	.....	.....	2
United States	1576	287	63	1926
Not stated	165	77	50	292
Total	6447	2680	1184	10311
Born in the United States	1576	287	63	1926
Aliens	4871	2393	1121	8385

Table 30.1 William J. Bromwell, *History of Immigration to the United States* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 24.

Year Ending September 30, 1850
COUNTRY WHERE BORN

Countries	Males	Females	Sex not stated	Total
England	2959	2316	1	5276
Ireland	13463	14211	.....	27674
Scotland	357	270	.....	627
Wales	29	20	.....	49
Great Britain and Ireland	80173	51686	.....	141859
British America	4824	2738	234	7796
France	5521	2488	.....	8009
Spain	269	56	.....	325
Portugal	176	190	.....	366
Switzerland	104	42	.....	146
Belgium	530	525	.....	1055
Prussia	12	2	.....	14
Germany	39206	23962	.....	63168
Denmark	9	1	.....	10
Holland	399	177	.....	576
Norway and Sweden	819	544	.....	1363
Poland	2	1	.....	3
Russia	18	13	.....	31
Turkey	13	.....	.....	13
Greece	2	.....	.....	2
Italy	289	71	.....	360
Sicily	8	2	.....	10
Sardinia	3	.....	.....	3
China	2	1	.....	3
East Indies	3	1	.....	4
Azores	174	6	.....	180
Sandwich Islands	10	7	.....	17
South America	1726	736	.....	2462
Central America	57	14	.....	71
Mexico	415	83	.....	498
West Indies	2100	803	.....	2903
United States	4573	757	.....	5330
Not stated	42659	1669	803	45131
Total	200904	113392	1038	315334
Born in the United States	4573	757	.....	5330
Aliens	196331	112635	1038	310004

Table 30.2 Ibid., 148.

1. How many people came to America from England in 1820?
2. What countries sent us more than 300 immigrants in 1820?
3. What do these countries have in common?
4. What is the total number of immigrants who came to America from Italy, Russia, and Poland in 1820?
5. Other than Great Britain, what two countries sent us the most immigrants in 1850?
6. What accounts for your answer to number 5? (Use your textbook for help in answering this item.)
7. In general terms, what do the tables tell you about immigration to America from Eastern Europe and Asia?
8. How many Africans came to America in 1850? What accounts for that number?
9. Write a short generalization depicting the state of American immigration in 1850.
10. The nativist movement began in the 1840s. What group would have been its first victim?

The Early Industrial Revolution—Maintaining a Sense of Community

Read the following documents and answer the questions at the end.

Document A

The new urban agglomerations were drab places, blackened with the heavy soot of the early coal age, settling alike on the mills and the workers' quarters, which were dark at best, for the climate of the Midlands is not sunny. Housing for workers was hastily built, closely packed, and always in short supply, as in all rapidly growing communities. Whole families lived in single rooms, and family life tended to disintegrate. A police officer in Glasgow observed that there were whole blocks of tenements in the city, each swarming with a thousand ragged children who had first names only, usually nicknames—like animals, as he put it. . . .

Hours in the factories were long, fourteen a day or occasionally more; and though such hours were familiar to persons who had worked on farms, or at domestic industry in rural households, they were more tedious and oppressive in the more regimented conditions that were necessary in the mills. Holidays were few, except for the unwelcome leisure of unemployment, which was a common scourge, because the short-run ups and downs of business were very erratic during this period of bewildering expansion. A day without work was a day producing nothing to live on, so that even where the daily wage was relatively attractive the worker's real income was chronically insufficient. Workers in the factories, as in the mines, were almost entirely unorganized. They were a mass of recently assembled humanity without traditions or common ties. Each bargained individually with his employer, who, usually a small businessman himself, facing a ferocious competition with others, often in debt for the equipment in his factory, or determined to save money in order to purchase more, held his "wages bill" to the lowest possible figure that he could manage.

R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World*, 5th ed.
(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 423-424.

Document B

Some village mill owners provided schools for children whom they employed. The first was Samuel Slater's Sunday School, established in Pawtucket in the 1790s as essentially a secular institution for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic and modeled on similar English schools. Other mill owners convinced the local town to establish a district school nearby. Like rural schools that operated only during those times when children were not needed to help on the farm, mill village schools were in session only a few months a year.

To encourage social order and regular behavior, village mill proprietors often gave land to any religious denomination willing to organize and build a church. The Baptist Fiske family of Fiskdale, Massachusetts, went a step further and provided its workers with a church of the owners' choice . . .

The work force in cotton mill villages was ethnically homogeneous in the early nineteenth century. It consisted mainly of New Englanders of British extraction and some British immigrants. Beginning with Samuel Slater, British immigrants for many years provided a significant number of skilled workers required in textile manufacturing.

The overwhelming majority of production workers were native born and this would remain so until the late 1840s and the early 1850s.

Gary Kulik et al., eds. *The New England Mill Village, 1790-1860*
(Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), XXVIII, XXIX.

Document C

Imported goods were expensive. For everyday necessities the farmers continued to rely upon craftsmen in Rochester, and their insatiable demand turned the village into a manufacturing city. More than half the adult men in Rochester were skilled artisans, most of them engaged in turning local raw materials into finished goods for sale back to the countryside. The sixty-five workshops of 1823 concentrated on the necessities and little luxuries of rural life: guns and nails, shoes, hats, woolen cloth, wagons, furniture, farm tools—even jewelry and mirrors. These last testify to a growing prosperity and urbanity in the countryside. . . .

In 1820 most Rochesterians worked, played, and slept in the same place. There were no neighborhoods as we understand them: no distinct commercial and residential zones, no residential areas based upon social class. The integration of work and family life and of master and wage earner produced a nearly random mix of people and activities on the city's streets. . . .

The reorganization of work brought change into the most intimate corners of daily life. . . . On most jobs, employment was conditional on co-residence. Even workmen whose fathers and brothers headed households in Rochester lived with employers. Work, leisure, and domestic life were acted out in the same place and by the same people, and relations between masters and men transferred without a break from the workshop to the fireside. . . .

Wage earners were young and poor and numerous. Left alone, they might cause trouble. But with each of them a member of some household, and with householders answerable for the behavior of everyone under their care, the community could breathe easy. Public opinion held heads of families accountable for what their "children and dependents" did. . . .

Rochester proprietors had migrated from villages in which the public peace was secure. In the villages the more troublesome outsiders and dissidents were expelled. The others were governed by household heads, the disciplinary machinery of the church, and the web of community relationships . . .

Liquor was embedded in the pattern of irregular work and easy sociability sustained by the household economy. It was a bond between men who lived, worked, and played together, a compliment to the unique kind of domination associated with that round of life. Workmen drank with their employers, in situations that employers controlled. The informal mixing of work and leisure and of master and wage earner softened and helped legitimate inequality. At the same time drunkenness remained within the bounds of what the master considered appropriate. . . .

In the early years, disorder and insubordination were held in check, for master and wage earner worked together and slept under the same roof. Fights between workmen were rare, and when they occurred masters witnessed the intelligible and personal stream of events that led up to them. Wage earners loafed or drank or broke the Sabbath only with the master's knowledge and tacit consent. When workers lived with proprietors or within sight of them, serious breaches of the peace or of accepted standards of labor discipline were uncommon. At the very least, workingmen were constrained to act like guests, and masters enforced order easily, in the course of ordinary social and economic transactions. . . .

A generation of change . . . transformed Jefferson's republic of self-governing communities into Jackson's boisterous capitalist democracy. . . .

Established churches, stable neighborhoods, families, authoritative local elites: these and internalized restraints of every kind were swept away by the market, by migration and personal ambition, and by the universal acceptance of democratic ideas. . . .

The drinking problem of the late 1820s stemmed directly from the new relationship between master and wage earner. Alcohol had been a builder of morale in household workshops, a subtle and pleasant bond between men. But in the 1820s proprietors turned their workshops into little factories, moved their families away from their places of business, and devised standards of discipline, self-control, and domesticity that banned liquor. By default, drinking became part of an autonomous working-class social life, and its meaning changed. . . .

By 1830 the household economy had all but passed out of existence, and so had the social order that it sustained. Work, family life, the makeup of neighborhoods—the whole pattern of society—separated class from class: master and wage earner inhabited distinct social worlds. Workmen experienced new kinds of harassment on the job. But after work they entered a fraternal, neighborhood-based society in which they were free to do what they wanted. At the same time masters devised standards of work discipline, domestic privacy, and social peace that were directly antithetical to the spontaneous and noisy sociability of the workingmen. The two worlds stood within a few yards of each other, and they fought constantly.

Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millenium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 9, 19, 48, 43, 44, 62, 55, 56-57, 60, 139.

1. Why did American observers find the early English factory system objectionable?
2. What specific factors suggested by the readings softened the social effects of the early Industrial Revolution in America?
3. What vision did early mill owners have about maintaining social control in the ideal industrial community?

4. What safety valves provided an escape for discontented American workers and lessened exploitation of laborers in the United States in the early 1800s?

5. What caused the character of the Industrial Revolution in the United States to change from one of concern to one of exploitation?

6. Many persons, including Thomas Jefferson, feared the social effects of the Industrial Revolution on American civilization. What impact did Jefferson believe this economic change would have on the idyllic agrarian life style? (Use other references to answer this question.)

7. Were Jefferson and other critics of industrialization justified in their concerns about the impact of industrialization? Explain your answer.

Name _____

Date _____

The Journey of Angela Heck

Read the following letter written by Angela Heck, an immigrant from the German states, and record your impressions at the appropriate breaks.

New York, July 1, 1854

Dearest Relations,

We are writing to tell you that our ship left Antwerp on March 21st. [first days of voyage; death of four children] Then we sailed with bad winds into Easter week, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Then the ship started to roll. Then it was like everyone was drunk. One went running this way, another that way, in order to be sick. Most of the people couldn't face even the mere thought of food. Hauer, Nussbaum, and my husband sat tight on our trunks. The other 8 of us couldn't stand the sight of them eating we were so ill. Then things calmed down a bit until the night of Easter Sunday.

Stop. Record your impressions.

Conditions	Adjectives	Emotions

Around 12 o'clock there was a noise up on deck that was so loud that everyone awoke. The sailors and helmsman and captain were all on deck for we were now having such a terrible storm that we thought the ship would be torn apart. We all started to tremble and shake. It kept getting worse. We all started praying out loud, all of us in the ship, almost 300 people and all Catholic and almost all from villages near ours, from Luxembourg and from our county. At daybreak things got even worse, that is on Easter Monday. The ship was listing to one side and all the top planks started to break. We had to hold on as tight as we could to keep from falling out. Then we all started again and prayed 17 rosaries before we stopped. All those who didn't know how to pray had to learn. We all called on all the Saints in Heaven and God, the Holy Mother of God, Saint Nikolas [a saint called upon in times of great need; also a patron saint of seamen], but things kept getting worse and worse. We thought the ship would be ripped apart at any moment. The ship was listing so much that you couldn't lie down, stand up or sit. There weren't any windows in the ship except where the stairs went up. There was an opening there. And also across from our beds. The stairs were then closed off since water was coming into the ship from the deck above and the small trunks started floating around. Our boys [boys

from the village, since the Hecks had no children at the time] let them float away because they didn't think we would need them. It was so loud, the ship was sailing just like it was in a valley and on both sides it was so high you couldn't see over, just water everywhere. The ship started to crack, two masts broke and their sails and ropes were ripped and torn to pieces. Then the ship sank down very deep and water came into the opening like it was being poured in with a bucket. They couldn't shut this or else we would have suffocated. We were all so frightened we couldn't even pray. We repented our sins and we all prepared to die. Johann and K. Limburg were still sitting in bed naked and held onto us as well as we could. We quickly put on our undershirts so we wouldn't be lying there naked when we died.

Stop. Record your impressions.

Conditions	Adjectives	Emotions

For two days we hadn't put on any shoes and stockings. Our boys lay between the trunks and had tied the trunks down with ropes. For three days we couldn't cook since no one could go up on deck since the water was pouring in over the side. The first day no one ate anything, up to the evening of the second day, then we ate the first bit of our ham raw. On Maundy Thursday we ate the last of the bread we had brought from home. Those who had never believed in God now got a chance to see that He exists. We never forgot Him in our prayers, since we prayed three rosaries every morning and evening. Almost everyone on the ship was unattached, boys and girls, some 30 of them from Konsdorf [a village in Luxembourg]. Our ship was thrown so far off course by the storm that they hardly knew where we were. We kept hoping from one day to the next but all we saw was sky and water every time we looked. [food ran short] Finally we saw a lot of ships, one after another. Then we were told we would soon be on land. Then finally on May 17th we saw land and cities. But then we still had to wait on the ship until the doctor came. [Before a ship entered the port of New York, a medical officer came aboard to make sure that none of the passengers were suffering from contagious diseases]. But he was finished quickly.

Name _____

Date _____

Stop. Record your impressions.

Conditions	Adjectives	Emotions

Everyone left the ship, for there were no more people who were sick on board. Then our trunks were taken to shore on a steamboat and we also came on a steamboat. There was a young man there from Hefnig near Echternach who was there to meet his countrymen, a real rascal. He then led all of us who were in the ship to a German boardinghouse in New York. There we ate three meals and slept one night. Then everyone had to pay 7 francs. My husband had to pay 14 francs for the two of us, since they had put all the trunks in the cellar and no one could get them back before he paid. [Locking up the baggage of the emigrants was a popular way for innkeepers to force their guests to pay for food and lodging. The prices charged were exorbitant]. The next day most of them moved on to the train. It was all very sad. Most of them didn't have enough money and couldn't go where they wanted. The extra weight of the trunks cost more than they had imagined. [many had to throw away their belongings] We were able to hold on to the money we still had, for one man told us that if you were a tailor you should stay in New York. We had hardly been here for fifteen minutes when they came running to us with cards looking for tailors. [they were able to keep all their baggage] Everyone was very sad when they left but not us because we already knew where we were going. And we also would have had enough money left even if we hadn't found work so quickly, but we were quickly taken care of. When the others from Irrel left on the train, we drove happily with our trunk to our tenement.

Stop. Record your impressions.

Conditions	Adjectives	Emotions

Name _____

Date _____

One other thing I want to tell you: there were 300 of us when we went on board the ship. But when we left, our numbers had increased to the millions. And these countrymen were called lice. The ship was full of them. We didn't have any though. . . .¹

Stop. Record your impressions.

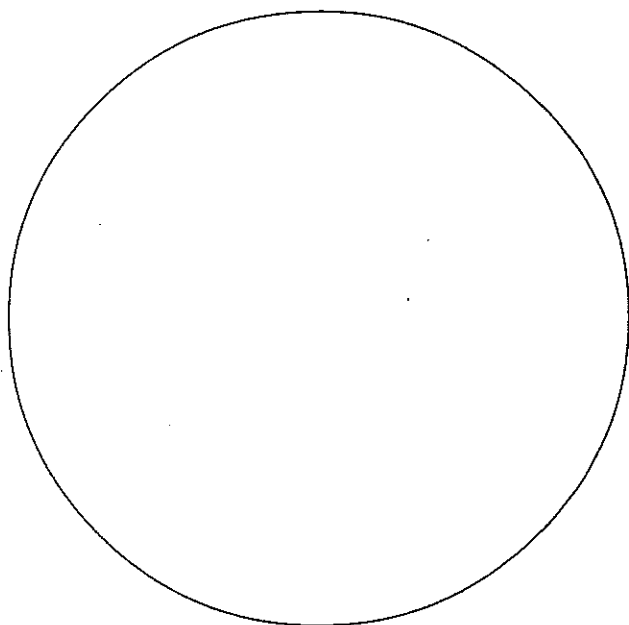
Conditions	Adjectives	Emotions

¹Angela Heck (letter), in *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home*, ed. Walter D. Kamphoefner, et al. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 371–373.

Shaping Up a Summary

Use this worksheet to record your understanding of German immigration that occurred during the Jacksonian Era.

A Question Going AROUND in My Mind



Two Things That I Learned

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Three Important POINTS to Remember

